

In the Claims:

Claims 1-15 and 22-25, 27-31, 33 and 34 are currently pending in this application. Claims 16-21 have been withdrawn from consideration, and by virtue of this response, are canceled from the present application without disclaimer or prejudice. Claims 1 and 13, 22, 23, 25, 28, and 31 have been amended. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A sports shaft comprising:
 - an elongated body portion comprising a synthetic semi-flexible material, the elongated body having a first end and a second end;
 - a tapered portion disposed on the elongated body portion, the tapered portion sufficiently removed from a head receiving portion to allow hand placement without contacting the head receiving portion; and
 - a gripable coating disposed on an outer surface of the elongated body portion.
2. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, further including a first outwardly tapered head receiving portion disposed on the first end.
3. (original) The sports shaft of claim 2, further including a second outwardly tapered head receiving portion disposed on the second end.
4. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, wherein the elongated body has a rounded non-protruding octagon cross-sectional shape.
5. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, wherein the synthetic semi-flexible material includes carbon fiber.
6. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, wherein the synthetic semi-flexible material includes graphite.

7. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, wherein the tapered portion is tapered inwardly, such that the tapered portion has a smaller diameter than the remainder of the elongated body.

8. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, wherein the tapered portion is disposed in a position on the elongated body that is consistent with a standard hand position of a player for the sport within which the sports shaft is designed to be used.

9. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, wherein the gripable coating includes a rubberized paint coating.

10. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, wherein the sports shaft conforms to the regulations of a lacrosse stick shaft.

11. (original) The sports shaft of claim 3, further including a lacrosse head disposed on an end of the elongated shaft, the end selected from the group consisting of the first end and the second end.

12. (original) The sports shaft of claim 1, further including a detachable head disposed on an end of the elongated body.

13. (currently amended) A lacrosse shaft comprising:

an elongated body portion comprising a synthetic semi-flexible material;

the elongated body portion having a first end and a second end, the first end including a first outwardly tapered head receiving portion and the second end including a second outwardly tapered head receiving portion;

an inwardly tapered grip portion disposed on the elongated body portion and removed from at least one of the first end and second end to be gripped without contacting a head;

a gripable coating disposed on selected portions of an outer surface of the elongated body portion, wherein the gripable coating comprises a rubberized paint coating,

wherein a detachable head can be detachably coupled to a head receiving portion selected from the group consisting of the first outwardly tapered head receiving portion and the second outwardly tapered head receiving portion such that the inwardly tapered grip portion is separated from the contact the head.

14. (original) The lacrosse shaft of claim 14, wherein the selected portions of the outer surface comprise locations where a player would grip the lacrosse shaft.

15. The lacrosse shaft of claim 14, wherein the selected portions comprise the entire outer surface.

16-21. (canceled)

22. (currently amended) A sports shaft comprising:

an elongated body comprised of a synthetic semi-flexible material, the elongated body having a first end and a second end;

a tapered portion disposed on the elongated body portion, the tapered portion being proximate the first end and out of contact with the first end;

a gripable coating disposed on an outer surface of the elongated body;

a first head receiving portion located at the first end and a second head receiving portion located at the second end; and

a head located at a location selected from the group consisting of the first end and the second end, wherein the head is located at either the first or second end.

23. (currently amended) A lacrosse shaft comprising:
an elongated lacrosse shaft body comprising a semi-flexible material, the elongated body having a first end, ~~and a second end,~~ and an inwardly tapered grip located away from both the first end and the second end; and
a gripable coating disposed on at least a portion of an outer surface of the elongated lacrosse shaft body, wherein the gripable coating comprises a low coefficient of thermal conductivity.
24. (original) The shaft of claim 23, wherein the gripable coating further comprises a rubberized paint coating.
25. (currently amended) The shaft of claim ~~23~~6, wherein the gripable coating covers substantially all the outer surface of the elongated lacrosse shaft body.
26. (canceled)
27. (original) The shaft of claim 23, wherein the elongated lacrosse shaft body comprises a polygonal shape in cross section, the polygonal shape having non-protruding rounded corners.
28. (currently amended) The shaft of claim ~~27~~9, wherein the polygonal shape comprises an octagon.
29. (original) The shaft of claim 23, wherein the elongated lacrosse shaft body comprises a flared first head receiver portion at the first end.
30. (original) The shaft of claim 29, wherein the elongated lacrosse shaft body comprises a flared second head receiver portion at the second end.

31. (currently amended) A lacrosse shaft comprising:
an elongated shaft comprising a semi flexible material, the elongated shaft having a first end, ~~and a second end, and an inwardly tapered section located between and separate from the first end and the second end;~~
the semi flexible material including at least one of graphite or carbon fiber; and
a rubberized coating disposed on at least a portion of an outer surface of the elongated lacrosse shaft body.

32. (canceled)

33. (previously presented) The shaft of claim 31, wherein the rubberized coating is disposed along substantially the entire elongated shaft.

34. (previously presented) The shaft of claim 31, wherein the rubberized coating comprises a low coefficient of thermal conductivity.